

**KEEP
CALM
AND
PRACTICE
SELF-CARE**



CALM DOWN

A CALL OUT FOR MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACHES
IN RADICAL/LEFTIST/ANARCHIST MOVEMENTS

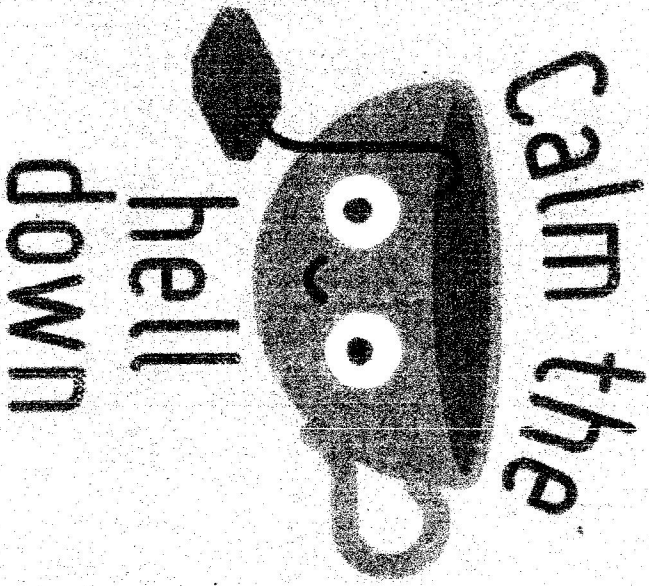
Calm Down

Thanks for picking up Calm Down Zine! We hope you find the stuff inside helpful! This is being compiled by folks in the Richmond, Virginia area. If folks find this zine to be useful we are interested in doing more issues or a larger anthology, so be in touch! We are including the names and contact info for all authors, because we stand behind the statements we make, and are willing to engage in civil dialogue about these issues. There is a strong temptation here to issue like 50,000 disclaimers before getting into the meat of the issue, but of course the culture which pressures us to make so many disclaimers is part of what is being critiqued herein. So perhaps disclaimers should be resisted. If you want to hate on the authors, surely you will ignore any disclaimers anyways. Hope you don't dismiss the ideas within.

Thanks

the Calm Down zinesters!

mokamage@gmail.com for submissions



<p>I m p l e m e n t i n g</p> <p>Outline your mission, vision, operating principles, long term goals, and over-arching strategies to get there, along with primary tactics you will take to accomplish your larger strategies.</p>	<p>Outline actions needed such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who: Names of responsible people ▪ What: Implementation & logistics plans ▪ When: Timeline for processes to occur ▪ Where: Safety planning for participants.
<p>E v a l u a t i n g</p> <p>Connect the tactics of your intervention with measureable short term impacts that theoretically will eventually lead to the long term outcomes promoting justice you want to see. This should answer the "How" and "Why" you are doing what you are doing.</p>	<p>Did you see the change you wanted to see over time? If your intervention is working, how can it be dynamic so that it responds to changing contexts over time? Should your intervention be transferred to other settings and/or locations?</p>

What are we doing this for?
 By Mo Karnage – mokarnage@gmail.com

This zine was an idea I had in response to some of the ineffective tactics being used amongst radicals/anarchists/leftists. As I talked to my friends, I realized that there are a ton of people who feel similarly frustrated by these tactics and attitudes, so some of those other folks were down to write about it, and thus this zine.

One of the major issues I see is that folks need to Calm Down. Before you jump down my throat here, no, I'm not denying the validity of emotions. Everyone's feelings are valid. This zine is not here to invalidate people's feelings, so just, well, calm down.

Individuals have emotions and that is totally valid. Social Movements however, sometimes require us to set aside our personal feelings and desires to some extent, in order for the benefit of the larger movement. Hell, I mean, our individual well-being often requires us to set our emotions aside as well. If you get mad and yell at people for being late all the time, your feelings of frustration are valid, but your methods of communicating that are ineffective in terms of getting people to listen and they make you act like a jerk. In fact, your yelling at people is more likely to make them not want to hang out with you.

Same goes for political movements. We all come from this broken society, we all come with tons of baggage. To get the numbers needed for massive social change, we pretty much have to count on individual change. To get individuals to change we need to be able to interact with them in a way that doesn't turn them off or make them defensive.

I think that we all do more yelling than listening because it is much more gratifying. I'm including myself in this group partially so that no dickweed tries to invalidate everything I'm saying by calling me a hypocrite, but also

because I totally let my emotions get the better of me and end up doing politically ineffective things. I'm working on fixing that. I think we all find the aggressive approach to be a faster, more public way of re-asserting our stances as anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-ableist etc. I challenge everyone to consider whether or not their response to some oppressive situation is more about their own politics or ego than about changing the other person's

Tips on how to align what you say you do with what you actually do:

	Create a Theory of Change Model	Align with a Theory of Action Model
Plans	Form your group of stakeholders and conduct reviews of the literature to see what has worked elsewhere to accomplish change similar to what you want to see. Conduct cost/benefit analyses, needs and capacity assessments, etc. to ensure local relevance.	How will the intervention be received? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the target audience for the intervention? Within the ecological context? What are the potential unintended consequences?

attitude. If you are just posting on some facebook thread or something to show just how good of an anti-racist you are, or how much social justice theory you've memorized and can recite, then like really what is the point?

To clarify — which tactics one chooses to use should be dependent on what one's goals are. If your goal in a particular situation, for instance, is to voice objection to a sexist image for instance, you might be doing this simply with the goal of making others in the room who might be feeling uncomfortable know that they are not alone, and they have allies. Saying something like, "Fuck this sexist bullshit, women are not objects for men's pleasure" might be what this look like. You might take a more aggressive stance, and physically remove the sexist image, wanting to make a statement and remove the problem at the same time. But if you want to convince the owner of the establishment to keep the image and others like it off the wall you might have to choose a different approach. And if you are a cis-male, then you should really consider taking a few calming breaths and finding your patience in order to effectively discuss the sexism with some sexist dude.

Unfortunately, a lot of times, it seems like leftists/ anarchists/ radicals etc. aren't trying to teach anyone, educate anyone, reach out to anyone etc. Especially online, the culture seems to turn into a who can be the most clever and snarky as possible contest. Who wins at that game? I'd say it makes us all losers. Sure as hell does not help the movement for social justice. We all flex our egos more than our compassion and more than our reason. This hurts our movements.

Social justice theory has some basic concepts with which I do not disagree. One being, that it is not the 'job' of an oppressed group or person to explain to their oppressors why they are being oppressive. The purpose of this concept is to try to have allies of the oppressed take some of the burden here, by stepping in to be the ones to intervene with someone who might be being racist or sexist or transphobic etc.. Part of this is also because the idea being that it is less harmful to an ally to have to hear some racist bullshit than it would be to someone it was directed towards, and so the ally would be more capable of not getting emotionally fucked up or triggered from the interaction and be able to try to be more effective in the conversation.

Or this is at least my understanding of the idea. Allies take one for the team, because they aren't as triggered by the bullshit not directly affecting them, and therefore can do more to be effective in intervening.

Understanding and being able to discuss the effectiveness of your action is critical. This is really about scientific evidence and yes, if you are going to go around messing with civilization, you (or at least someone in your group) should read some first. You will not be able to establish your own scientific evidence without having some sort of theory linking your action with the change you want to see in the world. For empirical evidence to be valid, you need to establish the reason

as to why you think it **SHOULD** work (or a Theory of Change). Since change takes much more than one person, you also need coordinated action planning (or a Theory of Action). Once you have identified and engaged a diverse group of stakeholders, then you should discuss and formulate your Theories of Change and Action. While documenting the full impact of a change effort can get quite complex, at the core of every evaluation should be an assessment of the alignment between your Theories of Change and Action. Change processes or interventions that are viable in one place or on one issue may also work in other areas or on other issues. If your intervention actually begins to accomplish its intended change, then you should seek to document your processes, findings, and lessons learned to promote its transfer to other groups who may find them useful. The table below provides a brief overview of some basic planning, implementation, and evaluation considerations to help you align words and actions.

and for now we must continue to strive to work together.

I am not saying that one should never take action until everyone agrees, as that would cripple civilization in a whole other way. However, when you are seeking to change things that impact society as a whole, even if your “intention” is to change things for the better, you have a moral responsibility to include those who will be impacted by the change in planning. Their idea of “better” may be different than your idea of “better.” This is okay and most likely the “best” answer for society is somewhere in between our many diverse perspectives. Even when we all agree what is “best,” humans still exhibit a steady resistance to change. Actually accomplishing human behavior change is MUCH easier when you engage said human in the change process from start to finish. If you are trying to change an entire community, then you are going to have to convince a lot of people to support you. But don't freak out, the rest of this essay is about how to help you align what you say you do with what you actually do so that you can act with a calmness of conviction.

In today's data-driven world, empirical evidence documenting actions taken and changes that have resulted is necessary for building momentum to accomplish change in a peaceful way. Having credible evidence is even more important if you want to work with elected officials to change policies or obtain grant funding to support your change effort

However, what I have seen a LOT of lately, is allies actually completely failing in taking any sort of measured response to oppressive people, and instead allowing their emotions to take control of them, leading to ineffective interventions. I've done it, no doubt. But I think that many times when we do this, we are actually being bad allies.

Let's get one thing straight- being right doesn't matter.

Let's get one thing straight- being right doesn't matter. You can be right until you are blue in the face and no one else will give a fuck and it will not change your situation except for the blue face thing. Realizing that changed my life. It literally does not fucking matter how right you are about any issue. The world does not depend on you, it does not revolve around you. Being right is irrelevant when compared to many other things about you. If you are incapable of calm conversation, compromise, listening, interacting with people who are different from yourself, etc. then no one is really going to listen to you and they are much less likely to take your position to heart and change their own.

How effective are our politics and our allies if we approach the world with an attitude that leads us to believe the worst of people?

How can we stand behind extremely radical politics, if we refuse to believe on a daily basis that individuals can change, and therefore we should approach them in this way.

I don't have all the answers to these questions, but I think they are really important questions for anyone who identifies as a leftist or radical or anarchist or social justice lover to ask themselves, their friends, their affinity groups etc.

The way that the academic based social justice movement has developed, at least from what I've seen, to deal with issues such as privilege, is pretty ineffective and irrational (how they analyze and diagnose privilege I agree with however). A recent one I have encountered is the issue of guns. Social Justice activists or whatever they are called have been chiding white people who carry guns openly or have pictures of themselves with guns (guilty of

both over here, whaddup), because white privilege gives white folks more protection from being shot by the cops for doing these things. Yup. It's true. But the implication of the attitude of the social justice people is that, since people of color can not do these things with the same impunity, that white folks ought not do them either. Or white folks should feel bad if they do them. Neither of these is a productive line of reasoning. If not everyone is given equal use of a 'right', or equal treatment/enforcement around a law, is the solution for everyone to give up that 'right'? Uhhh no. Cause the whole reason, seemingly, for folks to be upset that only white folk get away with

something is because they want everyone to have access to that activity or treatment. We have to also remember, especially us anarchists and radicals, that social justice theory coming out of ivory towers isn't something we have to take kit and kaboodle. Academia isn't revolutionary, and the folks coining terms and concepts aren't always doing so with larger social struggles in mind. We can and should adapt the valuable aspects of social justice theories to our movements in a way which fits our wants and needs.

Rhetoric is defined as "language designed to have a persuasive or impressive effect on its audience, but often regarded as lacking in sincerity or meaningful content." - and rhetoric is something I think we have far too much of in radical circles. We are quick to cleverness, quick to bold statements, and then we dig in our heels to defend our fancy words. I'm going to go ahead and give a concrete example here, which involves the issue of sexual assault, so here is a warning about the upcoming content. Please be careful, rape/sexual assault is the next topic which some folks might find triggering, take care of yourself and your friends.

Take this statement, "Kill All Rapists". It's something you run across online, and in real life. For many survivors of sexual assault, fliers and patches with this saying are empowering, something they like, or at least a rallying cry that encompasses their (valid) anger, upset, etc.

I've experienced folks of the Kill All Rapists attitude becoming very, very upset when other tactics for intervening with perpetrators are attempted. And while their feelings are valid, their feelings aren't leading to effective tactics. Like, I am fairly certain that none of them have killed a rapist. So if we have a community with rapists, and our options of reaction are to voice kill all rapists sentiment, or be labeled a rape apologist for trying something different, then like how are we actually doing anything to effectively make our community safer and to help perpetrators learn to not

diverse stakeholders is not without its challenges, but is a necessary component of a peaceful civilization. If you are trying to change anything about society and are not actively identifying and engaging those that would be considered "the other," then you are, accidental or otherwise, just another oppressor.

There are not many among us who would openly say that they "intend" to oppress someone, however humanity's long history of violence between groups of "others" bears out the reality that we all are complicit in this crime in one way or another. The resulting dissonance is likely our primary source of anxiety. Terms like race relations, gender bias, cultural competence, affirmative action, melting pot, or assimilation can create a sense of panic all on their own. Trying to discuss these concepts with someone who may understand them differently than you can evoke a sort of terror that if not psychologically managed, could create a situation where you avoid discussing things with "the other" altogether. If we cannot get past basic relationship issues and work together to manage civilization with equity, then we will never be able to stop those that seek to corrupt whatever is created for their own advantage. It does not matter if you call it communism, capitalism, socialism, whatever – there are those that will corrupt any system, anytime, anywhere, in order to maintain control over resources. Some of this is certainly human nature and we all might kill for resources in an apocalypse-type situation. However, the world has yet to descend into that pit

of it all, change can certainly feel overwhelming. For those of us who are dedicated to pursuing social justice, thinking about the huge problems we face can easily produce a panic attack. As more and more seemingly “middle class” folks slip into poverty and despair, the old notion of giving charity to those less fortunate no longer applies. Our struggles for justice today are about the rights of humans to have access to what they need to survive and thrive. This requires complex systems that must operate with transparency and in a way reflects the values of the people that comprise them.

We have thankfully legislated away the right to use physical force to secure resources. However the current system is leaving far too many humans in a deprived state, allowing violence to creep back in as an acceptable option. Insert more panic here. Even when you can get past the shock of everything that is actually going on to come up with some sort of strategy to try and change something, making that plan actually happen brings a whole other set of anxiety-inducing challenges. Knowing what to do in a time of crisis, and further feeling convicted that the people that you are intending to help actually agree that you are in fact helping them is the best way

to manage this panic and CALM DOWN. This sort of calmness in conviction can only occur if you authentically engage “the other” in your solution planning. There is much to think about when building partnerships among those that are similar to you, and even more to think about when you are

revising to engage “the other.” Coordinating action that includes

And if we don't believe perpetrators can change, then how do we think we will eventually SMASH THE PATRIARCHY? Or create any of the other major social changes our movements are supposedly about. This is a major conundrum of radical politics, and I think we are too often shooting ourselves in the foot and hurting our movements and communities because we don't stop to think about the implications of what we are doing and how it aligns with our beliefs and goals.

But so we have this sort of conundrum of our own creation. How do you respect the wishes of a survivor, but also do things which are effective in creating change? Folks in the mental health field have told me that the whole guiltning someone, alienating them, and trying to force them into something isn't really effective in getting them to change their ways. I'd tend to agree. In fact, a lot of radical politics strongly critiques the criminal “justice” system, and the way jails don't work to do any good. How can we create different dynamics in our communities? So what do we do about it then? What do we do when the wishes of the survivor or oppressed party in

a situation aren't things that are do-able (like ain't noone out there killing all the rapists yall). And what do we do when someone in the radical scene refuses to accept the principle of diversity of tactics? Or what if the things the survivor or others want to do about an issue aren't effective or useful? And here's an unpopular sentiment – just because someone is a survivor doesn't mean they know of effective ways to deal with perpetrators that will make the larger community safer. Like, just because something is called an accountability process doesn't mean it is always done well and would always lead to good results. What I am trying to say, is that situations aren't all as black and white, right or wrong, as we often try to make them out to be. Shit is complicated, and every situation and person is different. We have to be able to see that, or we are just as rotten as the society we come out of.

We can't let catchy rhetoric, or snarky sarcastic responses be the defining aspects of our movements. It's pretty lonely up their on the high horses/ high moral ground, and people below you aren't receptive. They aren't effective tactics to creating change. But we tend to align ourselves with a slogan or bitter response and then dig in our heels. It's time to dig out our heels and grow to understand the limitations of what our rhetoric prescribes. It's not working, so we need to try new things.

A friend said this recently, and I tend to agree, "PC Stuff is meant for us to be respectful to eachother, not to be a dogmatic new exclusionary language/behavior that slams anything outside its boundaries" -Anarcho-creek house comrade.

If we are radicals, then we must consider if the things we undertake are radical, if they fit in with our larger ideology, if they are effective. And while we are constructing a different culture, we should be careful of creating dogmatic, limiting, and exclusive culture. We want others to join us, not get run off because they didn't know the correct new terms or acronyms to use and got yelled at or talked down to. And if we want people to be disrespectful, we probably should start by treating them with respect. The whole parenting tactic of "do what I say, not as I do" doesn't really work out to well.

The bottomline for me is that we need to be more loving, more kind, more patient, and more welcoming. We don't have strong movements, we have fractured scenes, and we need to calm down enough to change our attitudes if we ever want to get anywhere good. And maybe we have to learn to simply give the folks with bad attitudes a bunch of room, but not allow them to dominate our movements. It's not that we don't have the right to be angry or upset, or that those feelings aren't valid, or that we don't sometimes need to use those feelings to direct our actions, its just that I think the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of acting on feelings without thinking of the movement and we need to swing back to some middle ground. There is too much tearing apart, too much fracturing, and we all deserve the type of movements which will give us better lives in a meaningful way. Take care of yourself and each other, we only have today.



Aligning Words with Actions

by Cyn Corrigan – sinbatllez@gmail.com

Globally, humans are interconnected in more complex ways than ever before. Transportation, communication, economics, and thus politics are all interwoven whether we like it or not. When things get complex, there is increased opportunity for corruption and exploitation to occur as power and resources are exchanged. In the long run, change is inevitable and ultimately has proven to work in favor of humanity; but when you are neck deep in the present day mur

issue in our society, don't argue with them. If someone argues that sexism isn't an issue, don't argue with them. If someone argues that we should spend more money on defense and less on "gubment handouts", don't argue with them. Chances are the majority of these arguments are happening on social media. No one is going to convince these people of anything other than what they're arguing on social media. It's a waste of time. No matter what actual evidence you might be able to provide to the contrary, they still aren't going to change their minds. They believe the earth is the center of the universe. Never argue with them. You will never, ever defeat them.

Always, always, always keep in mind that these people will never stop thinking the way they do and that they are going to be left behind by society if we can be successful. The argument should always be made for the people who read or hear it, not for the people you're arguing with. Tailor your argument so that the casual observer is going to follow what you're saying and accept your argument. It doesn't matter whether or not you "beat" the person you're arguing with. It matters that the people who might read it see you as controlled, compassionate and correct. That makes you someone they're more likely to be willing to join in with should they decide they want to give their time to something you are already dedicated to. Even if it's something that isn't happening on social media of some form but is happening in real life, keep that in mind. Lay the seeds for making allies. We shouldn't be acting like we're members of some kind of social club. We should be acting like people who, by default, because the people in power can't or won't, have to fight for our futures and the futures of the people with whom we live our lives. Always be looking at growing your numbers. Few things are going to be able to do that as well as being able to handle ourselves as human beings with self respect who respect the humanity of others.

We're either going to pull together or we're going to be stuck in a future nightmare none of us can even begin to comprehend.

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Love.

No one you meet will be the same as you.
No one will see the world the way you do.
Some will be ahead of you on the path.
Some will be behind you catching up

But...

No one you meet will be in the 1%.
None will be pushing forward this terrible society.
None will be thugs with costumes and badges, shooting good folks for the crime of being poor.
None will be our banker overlords, financing the military industrial complex and droning innocent civilians.
And none will be the boot on our collective throat.

Focus on the similarities. Stop fighting with each other over the 10% of issues we differ on, and focus on the 90% of issues we can work together to change.

You only have so much energy to fight with each day. Direct that energy at the forces and people that deserve your attention.
For everyone else, show love.

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Let's start with a very simple fact. If you're reading this, the chances are very good that you're screwed.

Don't take it personally, because it's not personal. We're all screwed. I'm cis, white and male, and I'm screwed, and historically if anyone was going to end up not screwed, it's someone like me. The current reality doesn't conform to history quite so well though. Granted, the majority of people who aren't screwed are white, probably cis and male, but what they've got that I don't have and that I'm going to guess most of you reading this don't have, gobs of cash.

The reasons we're all screwed are varied and many. Personally, I'd put climate change at the top of the list. I could become wealthy in comparison to my current economic condition, and still be screwed in that department. When it was recently announced that the sea level is going to rise by about ten feet, I was dumbfounded by collective sigh uttered by the world's population. Ten feet is no small matter. Just here in the US the majority of our population resides along the coasts. There is no possibility that this will happen without grave economic, social and political impact. Either major cities are going to be under water or there is going to have to be a gargantuan effort to prevent it. Considering that government is currently at a complete stand still, where even the war loving plutocrats can't find the will to insure the people they've sent to war are receiving the care they need upon their return, expecting that they're going to be able to develop, fund and execute anything like a realistic and effective plan for mitigating rising sea levels is about as realistic as an expectation of being transported through life on a winged unicorn that shoots rainbows out of its ass and breathes fire on fascists on command.

Combine that fact with another, the increased economic stratification being experienced by the majority of the planet, and it paints a stark picture. The majority of us aren't going to have the economic ability to deal with the results of climate change if this trend continues. No matter what dreams or ideas we might have about the masses/proletariat/people (whatever

militant groups were scaring white people near to death.

That historical inaccuracy has produced a divide today, and neither part of the spectrum seems to realize that they are more powerful together than they are apart. There is a very large section of the left that believes non-violence is the best and only way to accomplish anything. There is another section of the left that doesn't necessarily think traditional non-violence is capable of handling the problems we face. Most often, this comes out in arguments about property damage. Arguments about property damage miss the point utterly and completely. When dealing with a monolithic system of oppression with more arms than an octopus and more wealth than has ever been accumulated in the history of the world, a few thousand dollars in property damage isn't really damaging much, and it's not really accomplishing much either. Both sides will say of their philosophy/factics "It's a symbiotic..." blah, blah, blah. These two communities within the left fail to realize what they can be and do together. One of you is the stick and the other is the carrot. Working together instead of constantly waving your radical flag around to see whose is biggest and flies best will gain all of you more. If your end goal is the same, work together. Your pride may be hurt. You may have to make sacrifices or make compromises, but in the end, you're going to get more working together than fighting each other constantly and splitting your efforts. A few good victories will sooth those pains. A few good victories will also prove to people that joining up to help won't be a waste of their time. Today, wasting people's time is one of the worst things you can do to them. The chances are they have little of it because they're scrambling to be able to make ends meet, but if you can prove to them that you can produce results, they're more likely to give you some of it.

Lastly, stop arguing with people who think the earth is the center of the universe. It's a waste of time. Way back when, Galileo suggested the sun was the center of the universe, and he was hanged for it. Now, it's pretty much the way *everyone* understands things to be. Even the most religious among us won't argue that point. If someone argues that racism isn't an

never been a reason to. Attracting them immediately isn't going to engender the feeling that they are allowed to learn how to do it. It's going to engender the feeling that since they don't already understand the norms of a community they aren't a part of or haven't been in contact with, they're not allowed to be part of it. It means the difference between calling out and inviting in. If someone makes a mistake in how they refer to someone who is trans, it's an opportunity to invite them in and find out what kind of person they actually are. If they're someone who can be approached, given respect as another human being and they listen to the explanation about what offense they've committed, they're probably someone you want in your community. They're going to make it stronger.

Approaching them in a way that isn't an accusatory attack is also going to signal to them that they will be treated with the respect you're asking them to treat others with, and that makes a significant difference. Educate first. Attack and exile last.

The next thing is to realize that we all exist on a spectrum, and just because we may not occupy the same place on the spectrum or we don't even come close to being neighbors on that spectrum, doesn't mean we don't need each other. An excellent example comes from American history. Martin Luther King Jr. is generally considered one of the great men in our history. He's also almost completely credited with the success of the civil rights movement. Though he was most certainly a great man, a great leader and a role model many of us can learn from, the success of the civil rights movement can't be placed on his shoulders alone. Nor can it be placed solely on the philosophy of non-violence which has at this point reached a place in our cultural lexicon and mind that it has almost become something of a religious idol, like a magical elixir handed down from the gods. The truth is that without the likes of Fred Hampton, Bobby Seale, Huey P. Newton and Malcolm X, scaring the living daylight's out of white people everywhere, we just might be fighting to end institutionalized segregation to this day. Martin Luther King Jr. presented a white supremacist society with an easier way, and they took it in part because he had been successful in showing the inhumanity of what segregation meant and the inhumanity of those who defended it, and in part because rioting and

buzz word you prefer) rising up and wresting control from our oligarchic plutocrats are about on par with that winged, fire breathing unicorn. It may happen in other countries. I wouldn't rule that out. Here in the US though, the overwhelming majority of our population is fat and happy enough and hypnotized by the television and media enough that it's not going to happen. We can all scream about capitalism, the bourgeoisie, complacency and apathy all we want, but it should be obvious by now that nothing changes. Radicals of every variety have been tilting at windmills when it comes to

those subjects since long before I was born. I've seen and done some fine tilting in my day, and it still hasn't changed.

Those are two issues alone. They leave out a very long list of other problems. Classism, racism, gender inequality and bias, the continued loss of privacy through the growth of the police/surveillance state, the continued reliance on fossil fuels, the levels of food insecurity in the wealthiest nation the world has ever seen and so on... It's a depressingly long list.

The reason that the combination of climate change and current economic trends are important for our purposes though is that they create a very clear reality: *We're all screwed.*

Whether or not we like it, it's happening.

No matter what other issues, topics etc. any of us may find important and worth fighting for, these two things, when considered together, bring us together. Let's be very, very clear about something before I continue. I'm not saying that any of these other issues aren't important. They are important. They're incredibly important. Think for one second what's going to happen when a large portion of the population who've been living in relative privilege suddenly find themselves being subjected to the indecencies and dehumanization so many other have been subjected to for centuries. Will this be the coming insurrection so many different radicals dream and preach about, where the masses finally band together and overthrow their masters?

Probably not.

The chances are a whole lot better that those middle and upper middle class, hell, even working class people are going to start looking for someone to blame. Do you think for one second they're not going to find their scapegoats? Look

around you... There's a sizable portion of this country that currently thinks jobs are hard to find because immigrants are taking them, not because the monied elite sent the world economy into a tail spin, collected the bounty when it crashed, and are still profiting from the misery it caused. We're not in a "jobless recovery" because of immigrants. We're in this situation because we've come to rely on a small minority who have gained great wealth as a result of things being exactly as they are. Yet, for some odd reason, "immigration" is apparently an issue. If any of you reading this think for one second that these same elites won't make your community the scapegoat for some future disaster, you're deluded, completely and totally.

What I'm saying is that these are the reasons we need to find a way to work together. It's time to start setting aside the multitude of reasons the entirety of the leftist spectrum have been unable to work together. These are things we can begin building organizations and movements around that bring us together. Unlike what seems to be the popular belief, just

yelling into the ether doesn't bring together effective coalitions. Beyond the very straight forward aspect that we're all going to be negatively effected by this combination of horrid conditions, there's a reason that may resonate more with some of you. When it comes to prejudice and bias of any kind, studies have proven that nothing is more likely to overcome them than work. Generally, this means employment. In this case, it means the hard work of activism. People who may have biases against other members of a coalition/collective are more likely to lose those biases through little more than continued effort toward the same goal, and the very simple, human aspect of getting to know each other over time and through nothing more than proximity. If you want to see people begin to lose their prejudices and biases, get them working together toward a mutually beneficial goal. Getting various aspects of the leftist spectrum to be able to work together to some degree, no matter the issue/topics/reasons is going to start cutting away the divides that have kept us at each others throats for half a century or more.

What this means is that the activist community that can generally be qualified as "leftist" has to change. We've spent so long attempting to change the world, that it's time to start making the hard work include changing ourselves. If you'd like to look back to the 1980's, and follow all the way through to now, it's pretty clear that we've been getting our uncollective asses kicked from pillar to post, with a few exceptions. For whatever reason, we haven't changed in response to that fact. It's time we do.

There are a few very straight forward, common sense things that can be done to address these problems. It isn't rocket surgery. Climate change and economic disparity may not be the issues to do it, maybe there are more effective issues, but that doesn't make any difference in relation to what needs to happen for the left to begin to act more collectively.

The first thing we need to realize is that when it comes to each other, whether or not we're right probably doesn't matter as much as whether or not we can stick together. Do you want to be right or do you want to be effective? That's the most important question we can ask ourselves. When it comes to dealing with each other on an individual level, the chances are good that no matter how strongly we may feel about a particular issue, topic or discussion, destroying each other, fracturing possible coalitions, and demonizing possible allies is counter productive. We don't all have to think exactly the same and believe exactly the same things. The fact that we don't is bound to be one of our greatest strengths. Attacking someone because they haven't had the good fortune to be as well educated as you are about one issue or other is one of the most destructive and useless things we can do. What room does that

leave for people to learn? An unfortunate but very good example is the trans community. The majority of people in the country have no clue how to respond to someone who is trans gendered. Is there a lot of hate? Absolutely. But we have to differentiate between the hate of willful ignorance and just plain ignorance, the actions of someone who just doesn't know. It just plain sucks that people wouldn't do their best to learn how to give another human being the respect they deserve, but it's a fact that exists, terrible or not. For many of them, there's